

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

□ 1800

PEACE AND STABILITY SOUGHT IN
MIDDLE EAST

(Mr. BARCIA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, the people of Israel have endured a history of military threat that would have crushed a lesser nation. They have fought for and earned freedom and the right to be recognized as a nation of resolve.

The Palestinian people have also faced many challenges and difficult trials. The peace process has been as much a blessing to them as it has to the people of Israel. It was a major success for our Nation to have helped facilitate peace negotiations between the leaders of Israel and Palestine, and it is a delicate balance to maintain this most promising dialog. But recent reports that Yasser Arafat has invited diplomatic officials from several nations, including the United States, to criticize Israel for building in Jerusalem and redeployment from the West Bank can be a major impediment to the peace process.

I am deeply troubled by the fact that Israel has not been invited to participate in this meeting. I am even more troubled that the United States has apparently agreed to attend what would appear to be a one-sided meeting. Just as we cannot hear the sound of one hand clapping, we cannot expect to resolve conflicts by hearing only one side of the story.

Over the years our Nation, under several Presidents, has invested too much to blemish the wonderful image that we all have of Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin shaking hands in front of President Clinton at the White House, signifying that an era of mutual respect was replacing one of hostility.

I implore President Clinton and Secretary Albright to reconsider our participation in the meeting in Gaza. Please do not allow the news of the moment to overwhelm the work of a generation of leaders. Do not attend this meeting unless both parties to the negotiations agree that it will contribute to stability and our ultimate goal of peace in the Middle East.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO
MEXICO-UNITED STATES INTER-
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Without objection, and pursuant to the provisions of 22 U.S.C. 276h, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. KOLBE of Arizona, Chairman.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO
CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to the provisions of 22 U.S.C. 276d, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. HOUGHTON of New York, Chairman.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to the provisions of Section 3 of Public Law 93-304, as amended by Section 1 of Public Law 99-7, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe:

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, co-chairman; and Messrs. PORTER, WOLF, SALMON, and CHRISTENSEN.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT TO NATIONAL COM-
MITTEE ON VITAL AND HEALTH
STATISTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, and pursuant to the provisions of section 306(k)(3)(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 242k(k)), as amended by section 263 of Public Law 104-191, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of Mr. Jeffrey S. Blair of Atlanta, Georgia to the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics on the part of the House.

There was no objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the outstanding work of Lou Hinds, who has managed the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on my home Island of

Sanibel for the last 7 years. It came as no surprise when I heard that Lou was recently named "Refuge Manager of the Year" by the National Wildlife Refuge Association. He will receive his award in Washington on Monday, March 17. Throughout his service, Lou has taken a partnership approach to managing the refuge, involving local students, residents, tourists and community leaders. The community outreach program under Lou's direction is one of the most innovative in the country and many other refuges are working to replicate it.

The involvement of the community has been crucial to the success of the refuge. Realizing that the current visitor's center cannot adequately meet demand, refuge volunteers are spearheading a drive to improve the visitor's center through the use of private funds.

The refuge also works extensively with local students. Most notably, the Junior Naturalist Program, an educational partnership with an elementary school adjacent to the refuge, has been a terrific success.

This community-oriented approach has benefited the refuge in terms of more space, equipment, and volunteers, but more important, it has allowed the refuge to serve as an educational resource for residents of southwest Florida and our many visitors from around the world. As a result, many have learned firsthand that by pursuing a sensible approach to safeguarding our resources, we can maintain a reasonable balance between growth and environmental protection.

Lou's work has made "Ding" Darling one of the finest refuges in the Nation, and I know that I speak for southwest Florida in expressing gratitude for the time and energy he has given so enthusiastically over the years. I want to extend sincere congratulations for a well-deserved honor.

EXPORT PROMOTION PROGRAMS
KEEP JOBS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. MANZULLO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, we are engaged in a massive war, not with communist enemies or terrorist states, but with our friends and allies. This is not a military conflict, but a global economic war, competing for billions and billions' worth of export opportunities.

The battlefields are the towns and the factories spread throughout this great land of ours, and the foot soldiers in this war are the hard-working individuals whose efforts receive little recognition, but who drive the economy. They get up every morning, pack their lunch, get their kids off to school, go to their jobs and put a meaningful day's work in, and return home to their families, often unaware that a global economic war swirls around them.

This year Congress will reexamine several export promotion programs, including the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Trade and Development Agency, the International Trade Administration, and the Commerce Department.

All of these programs are vital strategic arms, helping these forgotten